

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01

DODE-00 CPR-02 L-03 SS-20 NSC-07 PRS-01 SAM-01 ACDA-19

DRC-01 /085 W

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R 060343Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5651

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY SANAA

USMISSION NATO

CINCPAC HONOLULU

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

CINCUSNAVEUR

CINCLANT

COMIDEASTFOR

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

S E C R E T TEHRAN 1790

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR IO IR

SUBJ: SUPPORT OF US NAVAL PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN AREA

REF: STATE 028332

SUMMARY; IN GENERAL, GOI IS PLEASED TO HAVE US SHIPS VISIT
PERSIAN GULF PORTS AND WELCOMES OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOINT EXERCISES
WITH USN. HOWEVER, WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL FOR POLITICAL AND OTHER
REASONS NOT TO ABUSE THIS HOSPITALITY BY TOO-FREQUENT USE OF
IRANIAN FACILITIES. WE NEED BETTER AND FASTER COMMUNICATION
AND COORDINATION ON NAVAL OPERATIONS IN THIS AREA AS THEY

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AFFECT IRAN. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING REPORT, WHICH DRAWS ON SHIP VISIT EXPERIENCE OF AMCONSUL KHORRAMSHAHR AND MAAG AND DAO OFFICERS, IS KEYED TO QUESTIONS IN REFTEL:

A. WE BELIEVE UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS THAT SPACING US SHIP VISITS TO IRAN NO CLOSER THAN ONE PER MONTH WOULD BE ABOUT RIGHT. ON OCCASION, SUCH VISITS MIGHT INCLUDE TWO OR THREE SHIPS AT SAME TIME. HOWEVER, WE SHOULD AVOID BUNCHING PORT CALLS WITHIN A SHORT TIME SPAN. TO AVOID CROWDING AND OVERLAP, THERE SHOULD BE CLOSE COORDINATION BETWEEN INDIAN OCEAN TASK GROUP AND COMIDEASTFOR DEPLOYMENT SCHEDULES. (IN THIS MESSAGE WE ARE INCLUDING BOTH INDIAN OCEAN AND COMIDEASTFOR SHIPS UNDER RUBRIC "US SHIPS".)

B. OVERFLIGHT AND LANDING CLEARANCES FOR COD AND OTHER SUPPORT AIRCRAFT HAVE BEEN ALLOWED AND WILL PRESUMABLY BE AUTHORIZED IN FUTURE. HOWEVER, GOI HAS TOLD US IT DOES NOT WANT BANDAR ABBAS TO RESEMBLE A US BASE. ACCORDINGLY, WE SHOULD LIMIT USE WE MAKE OF PRIVILEGES THERE.

C. SHORE LEAVE IS ALLOWED, BUT ENLISTED PERSONNEL MUST BE IN UNIFORM. OVERNIGHT LIBERTY IS NOT PERMITTED EXCEPT FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES, E.G. TRIP TO SHIRAZ. IN GENERAL, BANDAR ABBAS, BANDAR SHAHPUR AND KHARG ISLAND ARE NOT GOOD LIBERTY PORTS. THERE IS LITTLE TO DO, SEE OR BUY AND SAILORS, AFTER RECONNOITERING, OFTEN SPEND THEIR TIME ON SHIP. LARGE LIBERTY PARTIES (OVER 350) CAN QUICKLY SATURATE AN IRANIAN PORT. BANDAR ABBAS WAS SIMPLY NOT PREPARED TO COPE WITH CREWS OF THE BAINBRIDGE, MISPELLION, SCHOFIELD AND BRUMBY AT THE SAME TIME. FORTUNATELY, THERE WERE NO SERIOUS INCIDENTS.

D. THERE IS NO STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENT AND NO FURTHER BILATERAL AGREEMENT IS NEEDED TO COVER SHIP VISITS.

E. VISITING SHIPS TRADITIONALLY PROVIDE SHORE PATROLS, BUT THEY DO NOT ACT INDEPENDENTLY. PATROLS MOVE IN MIXED TEAMS WITH IRANIAN SHORE PATROL PERSONNEL.

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F. IF SUPPLY IS AVAILABLE AND US SHIPS ARE WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE, BUNKERING SERVICES WILL BE PROVIDED.

G. THERE ARE SEVERAL LIMITING FACTORS WHICH SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND:

1. WHILE IRAN HAS SOUGHT COOPERATION WITH COMIDEASTFOR

AND OTHER USN ELEMENTS, GOI'S PUBLIC POSITION IS THAT PERSIAN GULF SECURITY SHOULD BE LEFT TO LITTORAL POWERS. (WE SEE THIS POSITION BEGINNING TO BE APPLIED TO INDIAN OCEAN AS WELL.) WE SHOULD NOT MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR IRANIANS TO CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN THIS PUBLIC POSTURE. WE SHOULD NOT UNDULY PRESS THEM FOR NAVAL COOPERATION.

2. NEIGHBORING ARAB STATES SEEM HIGHLY SUSPICIOUS OF IRANIAN MILITARY BUILDUP AND IRAN-US INVOLVEMENT. WHILE WE ARE NOT IN POSITION TO COMMENT ON THAT PERSPECTIVE, WASHINGTON AND REGIONAL COMMANDS SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT RECENT REPORTING FROM JIDDA (736 AND 805) AND OTHER POSTS WHEN FORMULATING PLANS FOR USN COOPERATION WITH IRAN.

3. IIN IS SMALL, THINLY STAFFED ORGANIZATION WITH IMMENSE TASKS AHEAD (MANPOWER EXPANSION AND HARDWARE ACQUISITION). SHIP VISITS TAKE TIME THAT KEY OFFICERS AND STAFFS SHOULD DEVOTE TO BASIC NEEDS FOR TRAINING, PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS. PROUD IRANIANS WILL NEVER TELL US THIS, BUT WE SHOULD RESPECT REQUIREMENTS OF THEIR DIFFICULT SITUATION.

4. IRANIANS TAKE SECOND PLACE TO NONE IN MIDDLE EAST IN TERMS OF HOSPITALITY. BUT WE SHOULD NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A GOOD THING. THE NOVELTY WILL WEAR OFF IF VISITS ARE TOO FREQUENT. ALTHOUGH IRANIAN OFFICIALS WILL CONTINUE TO GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS, THEIR WELCOME COULD LOSE SIGNIFICANT CONTENT.

5. WITH REFERENCE TO PARTICULAR IRANIAN SENSITIVITIES, COMMANDERS OF VISITING SHIPS SHOULD MAKE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT ONLY TERMINOLOGY USED ORALLY OR IN WRITING (BROCHURES, MAPS, ETC.) IS QTE PERSIAN GULF UNQTE. NO OTHER NOMENCLATURE, NOT EVEN QTE GULF UNQTE, IS ACCEPTABLE.

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6. SECONDLY, GOI TAKES DIM VIEW OF OUR UNILATERAL RELEASE OF INFO PERTAINING TO US-IRAN MILITARY COOPERATION. WE SHOULD EITHER SAY NOTHING OR COORDINATE IN ADVANCE WITH GOI WHAT WE PLAN TO TELL PRESS RE JOINT PERSIAN GULF ACTIVITIES.

H. NO SPECIAL INDUCEMENTS ARE NEEDED TO CREATE A HOSPITABLE ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF THE IIN. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF WE EXPECT TO CONTINUE TO ASK SPECIAL FAVORS FOR SUPPORT OF OUR INDIAN OCEAN OPERATIONS, WE MUST BE BETTER DISPOSED THEN WE HAVE BEEN TO LET GOI KNOW WHAT WE ARE PLANNING, PREFERABLY IN ADVANCE OF A REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE. PROPER AND TIMELY CONSULTATION AND THE EFFORT TO IDENTIFY MUTUAL INTERESTS CAN HAVE AN EFFECT ON IRANIAN ATTITUDES. ANY PLANS BY INDIAN OCEAN TASK GROUP TO INVITE IIN SHIPS

TO PARTICIPATE IN JOINT EXERCISES SHOULD BE COORDINATED WITH COMIDEASTFOR WHICH FREQUENTLY CONDUCTS OPERATIONS WITH IIN. AGAIN, FOR POLITICAL REASONS AND BECAUSE OF IIN TRAINING REQUIREMENTS, WE SHOULD NOT OVERLOAD THE CIRCUIT

2. FINALLY, IT IS ESSENTIAL DURING A PERIOD OF COMPLICATED AND CHANGING RELATIONS FOR THE US IN THIS REGION, THAT THERE BE IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS AND FASTER COORDINATION BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN AGENCIES OF OUR GOVERNMENT RE NAVAL OPERATIONS. IF, FOR EXAMPLE, THOUGHT IS TO BE GIVEN TO CANCELLING US PARTICIPATION IN AN EXERCISE OR A SHIP VISIT, IT SHOULD BE DONE AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. THIS IS VERY MUCH IN THE US NAVY'S INTEREST, FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF ANY SUCH POLITICAL DECISION COULD AFFECT OUR MILITARY COLLABORATION WITH IRAN. HECK

NOTE BY OC/T: REFTTEL BELIEVED TO BE INCORRECT.

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